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Lane Claims Government Deception in Ryan De

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Attorney Mark Lane said "deception" by the U.S State Department and its embassy in Guyana was responsible for the death of U.S. Rep. Guy Ryan, D-Calif., four members of his party and more than 900 members of the People's Temple cult who later committed suicide or were killed.

Lane claimed the government knew of a stockpile of rifles, pistols and even a homemade bazooka at the People's Temple compound, statements by cult leader Jim Jones to lead as many as 500 people into suicide if threatened, and Jones' general unhealthy state of mind — and still it did not act to warn the lawmaker of the potential for disaster.

"They sent him off to Guyana, telling him that the only problem he would encounter would be that food and hotel accommodations would not be up to par," Lane said.

The attorney, who has been praised and criticized for his conspiracy theories, said he was acting as a go-between for Jim Jones, the leader of the cult, and Ryan, who was investigating reports that the cult was holding American members against their will in the jungle compound.

Cult members later shot and killed Ryan and four members of his party Nov. 18 and then committed mass suicide or were killed.

"The government's deception was responsible for his (Ryan's) death and for the death of 900 other Americans," Lane said. "If they (state department and embassy officials) are not legally guilty of murder, they are at least morally guilty."

He said officials knew as early as May 1978, from statements made by a dissident cult member, that there were some 200 to 300 rifles stored at the compound, at least 25 pistols and a homemade bazooka.

"The woman was told by Richard McCoy, an embassy official who is now with the state department's Guyana desk, that, 'When you get back to America, don't tell that to the American press,'" Lane said.

Lane made the remarks in partial response to news that a New York legal grievance committee had been requested to investigate reports by *Washington Post* staff writer Charles Krause that Lane knew Ryan and members of his party may have been served drugged food but withheld this information.

The request was filed by Jack Sando, a Washington lawyer, who claimed Lane violated a lawyer's code of professional conduct if the reports are accurate.

"The allegations are all false, every one of them," Lane said.

He said Krause inaccurately reported that he (Lane) did not eat a grilled cheese sandwich served him along with Ryan and the others, and said the journalist also erred in writing that Lane had brought cough drops to eat instead.

Lane said he ate every item of food served him in Guyana and said the only time he ate a substantial number of cough drops — which he brought because of the switch from cold U.S. weather to tropical Guyanese climes — was during the 24 hours he and Charles Garry, another attorney, spent in the jungle after escaping from the compound.

"I attribute all this to the ongoing campaign by the Central Intelligence Agency launched against me 15 years ago, when I alleged even back then that there was another gunman on the grassy knoll," said Lane, a longtime critic of Warren Commission findings that President John Kennedy's death was probably the work of a lone assassin.

In another matter, Lane has warned Memphis police he will file suit for a "substantial" amount if the department does not reveal who leaked a supposedly libelous statement he claims an officer made to a writer for *Esquire* magazine.

"All I said I wanted was the truth," said Lane, who attempted to get the information yesterday in an at-times angry confrontation with police officials at their downtown headquarters.

"When I said 'truth,' everyone down there seemed to get nervous," Lane said. "I was afraid if I said the word any louder, the walls would collapse."

Clyde Keenan, police legal adviser, who met with Lane, said the attorney produced a tape recorder at the meeting held in the homicide squad office and said he intended to tape their statements for possible use in nationwide television broadcasts.

Keenan said the controversy stemmed from an alleged statement by a policeman to writer Steven Brill of *Esquire* that Lane was responsible for placing packets of Kool-Aid drink mix in his door and then reporting to police that People's Temple cultists may have placed them there as a death threat.

Lane said he brought his recorder because he wanted to get at the truth and — if police would not cooperate — he would "release the tapes to the national media."

He said the four officers he began the meeting with excused themselves when he brought out the tape recorder, but then "reinforcements" — in the person of Deputy Chief Jack Holt, arrived and demanded the machine.

"I told him he would be making a big, big mistake if he touched my property," Lane said, "and he took his hand back."

The attorney said he then asked Holt for help in identifying the officer but said Holt told him instead, "I order you to leave this office."

Lane said he later attempted to meet with Police Director E. Winslow Chapman, but after being told he was at home ill, he filed a complaint with the Internal Affairs Bureau. He said bureau officers said they would try to have the name for him by Monday.

The Kool-Aid incident occurred Nov. 27 when Lane called officers to his home at 1177 Central and said he was threatened by the appearance of four packages of Kool-Aid, wrapped in a plastic bag, which had been placed in his door. A tub containing a type of soft drink laced with cyanide was responsible for the death of hundreds at the People's Temple camp, investigators said.

"We have investigated the incident," Keenan said, "but we have no suspects."

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